

Sunday, November 20, 2016—I Corinthians 7:10-16: Divorce During the Dispensation of Grace, Part 2

### Introduction

- Last Sunday, we began looking at the next section I Corinthians 7 where Paul begin to discuss the issue of divorce and remarriage beginning in verse 10.
- Before studying the details of the passage, we looked at some general passages about divorce, in doing so we observed the following basic points.
- Matthew 19:3-8—divorce was not part of God’s original plan. Divorce is a human invention. Because of the hardness of their hearts God suffered it and permitted it. Therefore, the Bible recognizes divorces and regulates it.
- All divorces are not sinful, but sin leads to divorce.
  - Ezra 10:1-6, 11, 19—113 divorces occur in a time of spiritual renewal and repentance to God.
  - Jeremiah 3:8—God divorced the 10 Northern Tribes of Israel because of their spiritual adultery and fornication.
- We saw that divorce is the formal legal ending of a marriage.
- Deuteronomy 24:1—states the three components of divorce in the Bible.
  - “let him writer her a bill of divorcement”—formal written document, ensures a deliberate and thought-out action.
  - “give it into her hand”—bill of divorcement is to be personally delivered thereby ensuring personal ownership by the one requesting the divorce.
  - “send her out of his house”—sending the wife out of the house is emblematic of a formal rupture of the terms of companionship.
- This morning we want to move on through I Corinthians 7 and study what Paul has to say in these verses about the topics of divorce and remarriage.

### I Corinthians 7:10-11

- **And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: 11) But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.**
- *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord*—in verse 10 Paul begins to address the “married.”

- The statement at the beginning of verse 10 references the Lord’s teaching on the topic of divorce during his earthly ministry found in the gospels. Verses 10 and 11 do not go beyond the teaching offered by Christ in Matthew 5:32, 19:6-9; Mark 10:11-12, or Luke 16:18 about divorce and remarriage.
- There are essentially three instruction given in verses 10 and 11 regarding divorce:
  - Verse 10—Let not the wife depart from *her* husband
  - Verse 11—But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband
  - Verse 11—and let not the husband put away *his* wife
- Mark 10:12—notice that the first two instructions in I Corinthians 7:10-11 are addressed to the wife. Jesus addressed wives in Mark 10:12. The wording is a bit different by the content is essentially the same. She is to remain “unmarried” or be reconciled to her husband. If she gets “married” to another she commits adultery.
- Matthew 5:31-32; 19:6-9—in I Corinthians 7:11 the same instruction regarding divorce and remarriage is given to the husband. In the gospels Jesus offered the same instruction to husbands that he gave to wives.
- Deuteronomy 24:1-2—notice how Jesus intensifies the Law with these statements in the gospels. The Law didn’t say anything about the “fornication clause” mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount, the passage that the majority of professing Christendom views as their instructions for today is full of these types of intensifications and amplifications.
  - Matthew 5:27-28
- I Corinthians 7:10-11—Paul is referring the Lord’s teaching during his earthly ministry in these verses.

### **I Corinthians 7:12-16**

- **But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.**
- *But to the rest speak I, not the Lord*— in verse 12 and following, Paul expands upon the teaching of the Lord during his earthly ministry by offering instructions regarding divorce and remarriage not found in the gospels. Thus it makes sense to view Paul’s, statement in verse 12, “speak I, not the Lord” as a statement regarding the specific and more complete nature of the content revealed to him on the subject of divorce and remarriage as it relates to the body of Christ. In other words, Paul is not saying that he is just speaking and offering his own judgment, rather he is referring to the further revelation committed to him with respect to the questions raised by the Corinthians.
- These are instructions for gentiles living during the dispensation of grace regarding the matter.

- In Israel’s program under the Law was there ever supposed to be a situation where Israelite men and woman were supposed to be marrying non-Israelite men or woman? No.
- Now, as Paul is preaching to the gentiles under the new dispensation, a new phenomenon is occurring i.e., split households where one spouse was a believer and the other spouse was not.
- Ezra 10:1-6, 11, 19—under the Law these folks should have gotten a divorce.
- I Corinthians 7:12-13—now Paul tells members of the body of Christ to not put away their unbelieving husband or wife if they are pleased to remain married.
- I Corinthians 7:14—the key point in this verse is what happens to the children when a situation like this occurs. Recall from Ezra 10 that when Israel divorced their “strange wives” that even their children were sent out of the house because they were unclean.
- When a believing spouse and an unbelieving spouse produce offspring, the children are not unclean.
- Given the situation in Corinth you can see why Paul would have to say this given their questions in verse 1.
- I Corinthians 7:15—if the unbelieving spouse wishes to separate the believing spouse is instructed to let them.
- I Corinthians 7:16—gives the reason why the believing spouse not instructed to automatically divorce their unbelieving husband or wife. The ministry of the believing spouse to the unbelieving spouse has the capacity to eventuate in their salvation.

### **Reasons Marriages Fail**

- There are two primary reasons that marriages fail and they both center around properly understanding Ephesians 5:32.
  - *Unrealistic Expectations*
    - Unrealistic—inappropriate to reality or fact
    - Expectation—the act or state of expecting, anticipation
- *Unrealistic Expectations* are anticipating and/or expecting that someone is going to do something for you that is above and beyond their ability to accomplish.
  - *Misplaced Dependences*
    - Misplace—to put in a wrong or inappropriate place, set on the wrong object or eventuality

- Dependence—the quality or state of being influenced or determined by or subject to another.
- *Misplaced Dependences* are relying on someone or something that cannot provide what one desires.
- Have you ever said or thought any of the following?
  - I'll be happy when I get married
  - I got married so that all my problems would be taken care of
  - I got married so that I would have unconditional love and acceptance
  - I got married so that I could retire
  - I expect my spouse to
  - This was not what I signed up for
  - I am so unfulfilled
  - My spouse is a loser that doesn't meet any of my needs.
- There are people in this room right now who are disillusioned with their marriage and/or spouse because of *Unrealistic Expectations* and *Misplaced Dependences*.
- Your marriage is not what you signed up for because you seeking to get from another human being what you can only get from Jesus Christ.
- If you are seeking to have your deepest emotional needs meet by another human being, you will always end up disappointed because you are asking them to do the impossible.
- Romans 5:8-9—How much does Christ love you? He died for you when you still a sinner and an offence to him.
- Colossians 2:9-10, 3:2—You are complete in Jesus Christ we need to look to Christ to meet these needs not our spouses. Because when we ask our spouse to meet these needs for us we are setting them up for failure and therefore our disillusionment with their inability to measure up.
- Ephesians 1:6—If you have trusted Jesus Christ you are loved and accepted and secure in and at peace with God.

- Understanding these realities frees you up to serve your spouse in love knowing that all your soulish needs are met in Jesus Christ and therefore not expecting your spouse to do something they are not capable of.

Ephesians 5:32—That's why Paul uses the example of Christ and the church.